DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 221 868 CS 207 190

TITLE	Technical Assistance and Training from the Document Design Project. Final Report.
INSTITUTION	American Institutes for Research, Washington, D.C.; Carnegie-Mellon Univ., Pittsburgh, Pa.; Siegel & Gale, Inc., New York, N.Y.
SPONS AGENCY	National Inst. of Education (ED), Washington, DC. Teaching and Learning Program.
REPORT NO	AIR-75003-11/81-FR
PUB DATE	Nov 81
CONTRACT	400-78-0043
NOTE	91p.
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Government Publications; *Layout (Publications); Program Descriptions; *Readability; Technical Writing; *Writing (Composition); *Writing Instruction
IDENTIFIERS	*Document Design Project

ABSTRACT

Contained in this report is a description of the technical assistance and training phase of the Document Design Project, a program funded by the National Institute of Education and intended to address and correct the readability problems posed by public documents. The first section of the report provides background material on the assistance and training given to writers and designers trying to improve the readability of public documents. The second section discusses seven writing improvement projects, including (1) Department of Housing and Urban Development regulations, (2) Federal Communications Commission regulations, (3) Internal Revenue Service tax form instruction, (4) Department of Education student financial aid applications, (5) Immigration and Naturalization Service forms, (6) National Institute of Health patient consent forms, and (7) workshops for writers and for managers. A summary of each project concludes the report. An appendix contains letters of appreciation written by clients to the technical assistance and training staff. (HTH)

ED221868

AIR-75003-11/81-FR

DOCUMENT DESIGN PROJECT

Technical Assistance and Training from the Document Design Project

Final Report

Prepared for the National Institute of Education, Washington, D.C.
under contract No. NIE-400-78-0043

November 1981

AMERICAN INSTITUTES FOR RESEARCH/1055 Thomas Jefferson Street, NW, Washington, DC 20007 • 202/342-5000
with SIEGEL & GALE
and CARNEGIE MELLON UNIVERSITY

CS 207 190

This report is part of the work done under contract #400-78-0043 of the National Institute of Education. The project officer is Dr. Candace Miyamura of the Teaching and Learning/Reading and Language Group. This report does not necessarily reflect the views of the funding agency.

ABOUT THE DOCUMENT DESIGN PROJECT

In September 1978, the American Institutes for Research (AIR) began the Document Design Project to foster clear and simple writing and design of public documents. The purpose of the Document Design Project (DDP) was to help make forms, regulations, brochures, and other written materials easier for people to read, to understand, and to use. Carnegie-Mellon University and Siegel & Gale, Inc. worked with AIR on this project. The project was funded by the Teaching and Learning/Reading and Language group at the National Institute of Education.

The Project's goal was to increase the knowledge and skills of people who produce public documents. To accomplish this goal, the Document Design Project had three tasks:

> Task 1: To conduct theoretical and applied research studies on language comprehension, on the ways in which skilled and unskilled writers work, on problems associated with different document features;
>
> Task 2: To bring research into practice by working with government agencies as they produce materials for public use;
>
> Task 3: To bring research and practice into education by developing courses on writing and design for graduate students and undergraduates.

If you have questions or comments on this report or on other work of the Document Design Project, contact Dr. Janice C. Redish, Director, The Document Design Center, AIR, 202/342-5071.

Table of Contents

I. Background Material

Introduction

One of the major tasks of the Document Design Project has been to provide technical assistance and training to writers and designers who are trying to improve public documents. In the three years of the Document Design Project, we have

- helped writers, designers, and evaluators in 19 Federal and local agencies with 35 different projects;
- developed a three-day course in Simplifying Documents and trained 42 writers from 15 agencies;
- developed a three-hour Workshop for Managers for supervisors of plain English projects and trained 70 supergrade executives from four Federal agencies;
- created a library of over 500 books, articles, and reports that researchers, teachers, writers and designers use;
- expanded from the NIE-funded project into a Document Design Center that provides free information services in the form of a newsletter and a colloquium series. The newsletter, Simply Stated, now reaches over 3,000 people every month. The colloquia have regularly brought together 35-50 people, primarily from government agencies, to listen to researchers and practitioners and to share their own experiences.

The American Institutes for Research took the primary responsibility for technical assistance and training. In the first two years of the Document Design Project, Siegel and Gale had a person in Washington working with AIR on technical assistance. She contributed in particular to the projects with USDA on the Food Stamp brochure and the Quality Book; with OPM on the first analysis of the 171 form; with IRS on Publication 590; and with the U.S. Postal Service on the Consumer Guide.

In addition, Siegel and Gale, through their New York office, conducted the technical assistance projects on the International

Mail Publication and the New York City regulation on home improvement contracting. Siegel and Gale staff also helped develop an early draft of the manual for the Workshop for Managers.

Technical Assistance Links Research, Practice, and Education

The technical assistance component allowed us to put research into practice--to see if the principles suggested by research in cognitive psychology, linguistics, English, instructional design, and typography are confirmed when they interact with each other as they do in any actual document. Researchers need to be more concerned with utilization (whether their results are ever applied outside of the laboratory) than they traditionally have been. The technical assistance component of the Document Design Project enabled us to work directly with people who use researchers' findings.

The technical assistance component also allowed us to bring practice into the research--to select research questions that have direct application to actual documents and to use actual documents as stimulus materials for our studies. Learning about practical problems in document design opens up new avenues of research for social scientists.

Furthermore, each technical assistance project was, in fact, a research study--we learned about how writers and designers work and about the effects of a particular intervention, the Document Design Project's assistance. Working with the people and the systems that produce bureaucratic documents has increased our understanding of the problems that writers have and enabled us to develop better education programs to train future writers and designers.

Criteria for Technical Assistance Projects

We selected projects for technical assistance on the basis of several criteria:

- The document had to be of critical importance to large groups of vulnerable people. We took into account
  - the size of the population affected
  - how dependent people are on the document
  - how much hurt or loss people will sustain if they cannot use the document.
- The agency that produced the document had to be interested in the project, and willing to commit resources--people and time--to it.
- The document had to expand the range of documents we worked with, so that we could find out how our research-based knowledge of document design applied to different situations (e.g., regulations, forms, notices, information booklets).
- The agency should have been willing to evaluate the document as part of the project.

Because of the importance of our first criterion, we were particularly concerned with documents that affect poor people and minority populations. Among our most important projects were projects to simplify financial aid forms, tax forms (including Spanish-language publications), information about Food Stamps, fire safety standards for group homes, and medical consent forms.

How We Set Up a Technical Assistance Project

The contact that developed into a technical assistance project could have come from us or from the agency. An agency may have called us and asked for assistance, or we may have come across a document that met our criteria for technical assistance and then contacted the agency. Once the contact was made, we required that the agency

- be willing to commit time and people to the project,
- consider evaluating the original and/or rewritten document,

and

- sign a letter of agreement in which we described the project and the roles of DDP and the agency.

We worked with agency staff at the middle and upper levels (GS-9 through SES)--primarily lawyers, but also writer-editors, economists, and professionals in other technical areas.

What We Did in a Technical Assistance Project

Our team of linguists, research and evaluation experts, lawyers, and graphic designers worked on projects involving forms and their instructions; regulations, guidelines, and legal notices; booklets and brochures. We also conducted workshops and one-on-one training in clear writing and document design. Our purpose was not to do the agencies' work for them, but rather to teach them how to clarify and simplify their own documents, and to reduce the burden of paperwork for all those affected by agency documents.

- We performed linguistic analyses and critiques of all types of documents, diagnosing problems and making recommendations for revisions. In doing this, we took into account the audience for the document and the system which created the document and in which the document functions.

10

- We edited and helped rewrite documents of all types, according to our research-based guidelines for clear writing. We worked directly with agency staff on specific documents to build their capacity in clear writing.

- We performed graphic analyses of forms, brochures, and other documents, providing recommendations for redesign based on research-based guidelines and sound graphic principles.

- We helped agencies to redesign public-use forms and other documents, taking into account the audience and the system.

- We helped agencies to evaluate their documents to find out how usable and understandable they are. We helped agency staff design studies, create test instruments, analyze data, and interpret results.

We structured each project to meet the needs and resources of the agency. One project may have only involved analyzing a form while another included helping agency staff to rewrite and redesign the forms. One project may have involved only a training session while in another the training was a prelude to working over a longer period on specific documents. We encouraged all our clients to evaluate their redesigned forms and rewritten documents, and helped them design an evaluation that would fit their needs and their resources. Our seminars and workshops focused on some or all of these tasks, depending upon a given agency's needs.

Our Technical Assistance Projects

Over the past three years, we worked with 19 agencies on the following types of projects:

A. Forms--and their instructions

B. Regulations--including agency guide-lines and legal notices

C. Publications--including booklets, brochures, patient labels

D. Workshops and seminars

A. Forms--and their instructions.

Agency	Project
Department of Education (ED) Office of Student Financial Assistance (OSFA)	Analyze the BEOG (Basic Educational Opportunity Grant) forms
Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Forms and Publications Division	Work with staff to rewrite instructions for Forms 1040, 1040A, 4684, and Schedules A, B, C, E, R, and RP.
Internal Revenue Service (IRS)	Field test draft 1979 forms
U.S. Postal Service (USPS)	Help design and evaluate customer service card
Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) Forms Control	Work with staff to revise I-20 (Foreign Student) form and instructions
White House Consumer Affairs Council	Develop consumer response form for EO 12160
White House Consumer Affairs Council	Help develop reader survey form for newsletter
Office of Personnel Management (OPM)	Serve on interagency task force to revise 171; analyze 171 form; suggest revisions to text and format
National Bureau of Standards (NBS) Center for Fire Research	Help redesign and revise forms and instructions for rating group homes
Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD)	Evaluate loan recasting agreement

B. Regulations, guidelines, legal notices

Agency	Project
Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD)	Help revise privacy act regulations
Internal Revenue Service (IRS)	Analyze notices
Social Security Administration (SSA)	Analyze rewritten regulations
Federal Communications Commission (FCC)	Help plan and carry out evaluation of Marine Radio regulations
Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)	Analyze and integrate three related regulations
U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food Safety and Quality Service (FSQS)	Work with staff to turn informal guidelines into a clear regulation
Federal Trade Commission (FTC)	Help revise guidelines for public participation in rulemaking
New York City Department of Consumer Affairs	Help revise law and regulations on licensing of home improvement contractors
Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)	Help produce and improve guidelines for public participation
Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA)	Review and suggest improvements for guidelines to states on administering a Medicaid program

C. Publications, brochures, patient labels

Agency	Project
Food and Drug Administration (FDA)	Analyze four patient package inserts (PPIs) for Valium
U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Office of Public Information	Help write and evaluate new information brochure about Food Stamps
Federal Communications Commission (FCC)	Review consumer information booklet on broadcasting rights and obligations
Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Forms and Publications Division	Help rewrite publications on Individual Retirement Arrangements (IRAs)
U.S. Postal Service (USPS)	Analyze and suggest graphic revisions for International Mail publication
U.S. Postal Service (USPS)	Analyze and suggest revisions for Consumer Directory
Internal Revenue Service (IRS)	Help revise Spanish-language tax publications
National Institutes of Health (NIH)	Analyze and edit medical research consent forms; create guidelines for writers
National Institutes of Health (NIH)	Create guidelines for writing assent forms for children
U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS)	Help evaluate distribution system for brochure

14

D. Workshops, training, seminars

Agency	Project
Food and Drug Administration (FDA)	Training seminar in document design
Social Security Administration (SSA)	Training seminar in clear regulation writing
Internal Revenue Service (IRS)	Seminar on clear writing for 150-175 tax law specialists
Bureau of the Census	Work with task force to set up consistent procedures for translating census documents into Spanish
Multi-agency	Set up conferences on how Federal agencies should communicate with Hispanics
Multi-agency	Three-day workshop for government writers--"Simplifying Documents"
Federal Trade Commission (FTC)	Half-day workshop for managers--how to review documents, how to set up a document simplification project
Federal Communications Commission (FCC)	"
Department of Education (ED) Office of Student Financial Assistance (OSFA)	"
Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Bureau of Medical Devices	"
National Association for Volunteers in Criminal Justice	Workshop on clear writing principles for writers of guidelines

In the next section, we highlight seven of these projects, including "before-and-after" examples of our work. The third section of this report consists of brief descriptions of each of the projects.

II. Seven Selected Projects

EXAMPLE 1
Writing Regulations That Non-Lawyers Can Understand: Department of Housing and Urban Development

Why We Selected This Project

The Privacy Act of 1974 prohibits unauthorized use of records that Federal agencies keep about private citizens. It also allows people to see, copy, or correct information about themselves in these records. Anyone who has dealt with a Federal agency may some day need to refer to the privacy act regulations. Yet only a lawyer could understand the regulations that most agencies wrote to describe how people can get access to their records.

What We Did

Shortly after the Document Design Project began, we had the opportunity to describe the project at an open meeting of the American Bar Association's Committee on Legal Drafting. Mr. William Granik, a lawyer in HUD's Office of Regulations, was at that meeting and expressed enthusiastic interest in a joint project to rewrite HUD's privacy act rules (24CFR16) as a model for that agency of how to write plain English regulations. With the strong support of Mr. Burton Bloomberg, Director of the Office, and the help of the Document Design Project, Mr. Granik reorganized and rewrote the rule.

The changes are striking. The new regulation addresses the reader directly as "you" instead of presenting information in the more formal and abstract third-person "any individual." The new regulation guides you through the rule with a more informative table of contents and a totally new "signpost section" which lists each right you have under the Privacy Act and where in the rule to find information about that right. Each section also begins with a statement of its purpose so that you can tell immediately if you have found the section that you need.

In the old rule, you had to wade through sentences as long as 127 words. In the new rule, this one sentence has become four sentences of approximately 30 words. By following the Document Design Project's guidelines, HUD has written a regulation that is not only much easier for people to use and to understand, but that also carries a much friendlier tone; the agency comes across as wanting to help people exercise their rights.

HUD proposed the plain English privacy act regulations in the Federal Register of July 21, 1980, acknowledging the help of the Document Design Project at some length in the preamble. Here's what they said about our help:

> In recodifying these regulations, the HUD Office of Regulations used the Document Design Project ("DDP") as consultant. The DDP is a project at the American Institutes for Research, Washington, D.C., funded by the National Institute of Education.
>
> The proposed rule is a complete revision of Part 16 which uses simpler language and shorter sentences throughout the regulations. In addition, we have rearranged the present sections of Part 16 into an order that is more convenient for the reader. Moreover, we have proposed a number of minor changes in the present Privacy Act procedures at HUD, to make the regulations more consistent internally.
>
> We have used two new techniques, suggested by the DDP consultants, to make the revised regulations more understandable. First, we have written them partly in the second person, using "you" instead of the "individual" to refer to the reader. Second, the revised regulations contain a "sign post" section (§ 16.3) which explains to the reader which sections to consult in order to exercise specific rights under the Privacy Act.

(Federal Register, Monday, July 21, 1980; vol. 45, No. 141, p.48655)

Regulations are reference documents. People go to them looking for answers to specific questions. But most regulations never clearly tell the reader what the regulation is about or where to find information. A signpost section tells the reader what is in the rule and how it is organized. The reader can go directly to the one section that covers his or her problem. A signpost section saves the reader's time and makes it much more likely that the reader will find what he or she is looking for.

Here is the signpost section of the new HUD Privacy Act Regulation:

§ 16.3 How to Exercise Your Rights under the Privacy Act.

The Privacy Act gives you the following rights:

(a) *Right to find out what records about you HUD may have.* If you want to find out whether HUD is keeping any records about you, follow the instructions in § 16.5, "How to get information about HUD records".

(b) *Right to see or get a copy of any record about you.* If you want to see or get a copy of any HUD record about you, follow the instructions in § 16.6, "How to see or copy HUD records".

(c) *Right to correct any record about you.* If you believe that there is an error in any HUD record about you and you want to have it corrected, follow the instructions in § 16.11, "How to correct HUD records".

(d) *Right to appeal a denial of any request that you made.* If HUD has denied any request that you made to see or copy a record or correct a record, you may appeal from this decision by following the procedures described in § 16.10, "What you can do if HUD denies your request to see or copy HUD records," or § 16.13, "What you can do if HUD denies your request to corect HUD records".

(e) *Right to sue HUD in court.* Your right to sue HUD in court for violating the Privacy Act is explained in § 16.15, "Your right to sue HUD".

The Document Design Project's research shows that people reading regulations are trying to understand what they should do or what someone will do for them. Most regulations, however, are written as if there were no actors or actions; they are full of passive sentences with lots of nouns and very few verbs. Readers have to take the time to translate the regulation's legalese into "scenes" for themselves. The plain English regulation saves them that translation time. Here is an example of how we translated legalese into English in the HUD Privacy Act regulations:

<u>Before:</u>

P16.9(c) The following criteria will be considered by the Privacy Act Officer in reviewing a request for correction or ammendment:...

(8) The propriety and feasibility of complying with the specific means of correction or amendment requested by the individual.

<u>After:</u>

P16.12(c) In making a decision on your request the Privacy Act Officer will consider the following:...

Whether there are any problems in correcting the record in the way that you request.

EXAMPLE 2
Evaluating a Plain English Regulation: Federal Communications Commission

Why We Selected This Project

The Federal Communications Commission rewrote Part 83 of Title 47 of the Code of Federal Regulations in plain English. Part 83 deals with rules governing the use of marine radios for recreational boaters. The FCC's goal was to produce a low-cost booklet of rules that the 300,000 recreational boaters who have two-way marine radios on their boats would find easy to use and understand.

The final revised version of this regulation consists of 22 rules in an 11-page booklet. These 22 rules were extracted from a much larger volume of rules that regulated radio communication on passenger and commercial vessels as well as on recreational boats. In revising the rules, the writers used plain English and other document design principles such as headings, tables, highlighting techniques, and white space.

The FCC thought that the revised rules were clearer, more readable, and easier to use than the original volume of rules, so they asked the Document Design Project to assist them in developing and conducting an empirical evaluation to test whether the revised rules are in fact more effective than the original ones. We agreed to participate in this project, because we have been trying to convince agencies that documents can be evaluated empirically and had been looking for a case study of an empirical evaluation.

What We Did

Document Design Project staff worked closely with FCC for over a year to develop the evaluation design, plan the sampling and data collection procedures, develop the test, and analyze the data.

FCC (with DDP's help) measured how effective and useable the regulations are by testing performance on a 13-item test. Each item presented a scenario or asked for information that required the subjects to identify the proper rule and then to apply it correctly. Some test items called for more information than others, and were given more points. A total of 20 points was possible. Data were also collected on the amount of time subjects took to answer each question and on subjects' ratings of the difficulty they had in using the regulations. Thus, there were four scores available for each subject: the number of answers correct (out of 20); the number of rules correct (out of 13); the average time per question; and the rating of difficulty.

One hundred and six subjects participated in the evaluation. One of the FCC's concerns was whether experienced boaters could use and understand the new set of marine radio rules. A group of 54 members of a local Power Squadron, an organization comprised of experienced recreational boaters, volunteered to participate. Another group of 52 new FCC employees with no boating experience participated to test whether experience influences use and comprehension of the new rules.

The evaluation consisted of a 2x2 factorial design. Subjects with and without experience were randomly assigned either the revised or the original set of regulations. The performance of each group on the criterion measure was compared by analysis of variance. FCC staff administered the evaluation so that the data were collected, scored, and analyzed under standard conditions.

<u>The results demonstrated that the new regulations were significantly superior to the original set of rules on all measures</u>. For both the experienced and inexperienced boaters, using the new regulations resulted in more correct answers, more correct rules identified, less time per question to answer,

and lower (i.e., easier) ratings of difficulty. The evaluation data support the use of document design principles for making public documents more understandable and easier to use.

1. Both groups answered more questions correctly from the new (plain English) rules than from the old (legalese) rules.

Figure 1 illustrates the average number of questions that the two groups answered correctly.

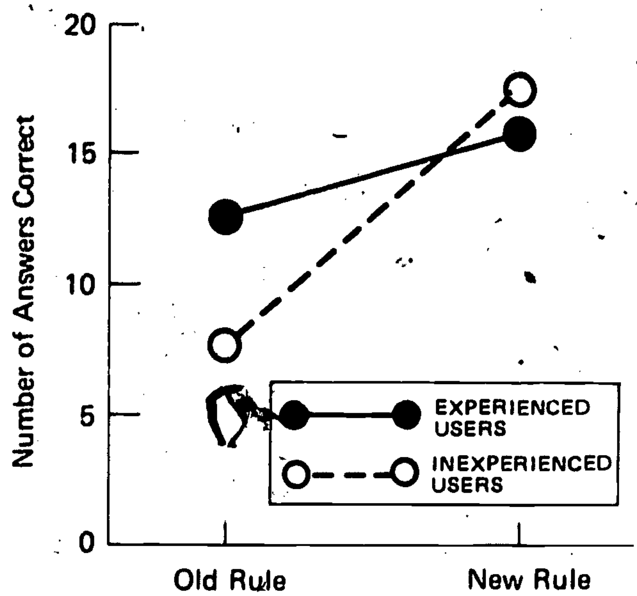

FIGURE 1. The average number of questions answered correctly (out of 20) by using old and new recreational boating rules.

2. Both groups had the same reaction to the old and the new regulations. They thought the old one was very difficult and the new one was easy to use.

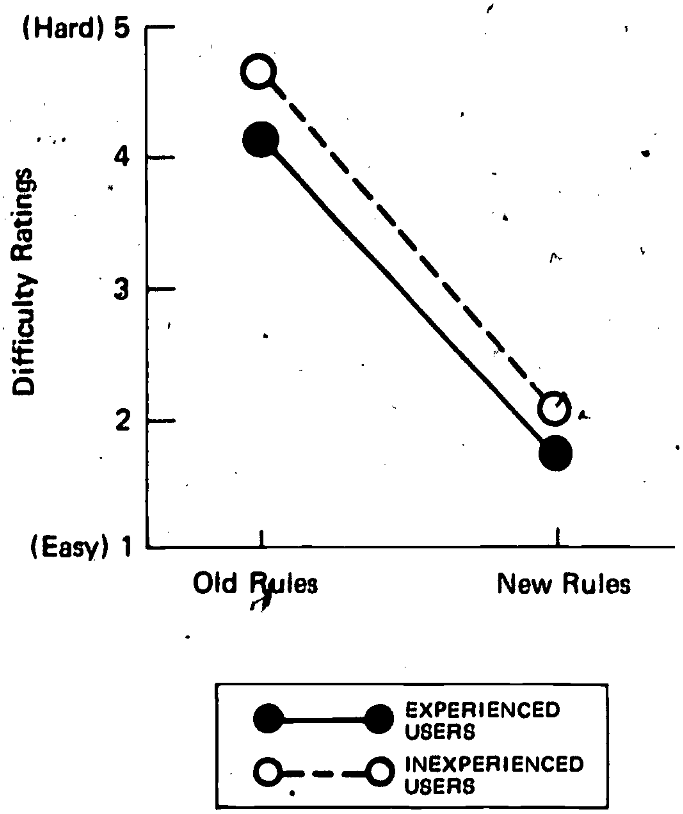

FIGURE 2. The average ratings of how difficult it was to use the new and old rules.

24

EXAMPLE 3
Simplifying Tax Instructions:
Internal Revenue Service

Why We Selected This Project

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has become increasingly aware in recent years that taxpayers have difficulty understanding and using tax forms and instructions. Error rates are high, and even people with straightforward, simple tax situations would rather go to a tax preparer than try to tackle the tax form. As part of its attempt to improve this situation, the Forms and Publications Division of IRS asked the DDP to teach its writer-editors and tax-law specialists how to simplify and clarify the language of tax forms and instructions.

What We Did

We began with a one-afternoon introductory workshop for about 175 writers and tax-law specialists. In the workshop, we presented and explained general guidelines for clear writing in public documents and then demonstrated how the guidelines apply to problems in IRS forms and instructions.

After that initial session, we began working with different groups in the IRS Forms and Publications Division that are responsible for updating and revising tax forms and schedules. Together, we negotiated changes to simplify and clarify the forms and instructions for forms 1040 and 1040A, form 4684 (on casualty and theft loss), schedules A, B, C, E, R, and RP.

In addition to this work, DDP conducted four other technical assistance projects with IRS:

- We advised on and participated in a field test of the 1979 form 1040.
- We helped revise publication 590 on Individual Retirement Arrangements.
- We helped rewrite the Spanish-language publication, Guia para preparar la declaracion del impuesto federal sobres ingreso personal.
- We provided expert analysis of two versions of notices that IRS sends to taxpayers.

Here is an example of instructions that were totally rewritten during our weekly revision sessions. They are for Schedule E. Note that the old version begins with a fact that doesn't seem relevant to filling out the form at all. The new version begins by telling the reader what the form is for and then relates the first fact to why people use this form.

Before

Part I

Pension and Annuity Income

General Rule for Annuities

Generally, amounts you received from annuities and pensions are included in your income in an amount that is figured on your life expectancy. You may find this computation and your life-expectancy multiple in Publication 575, Tax Information on Pension and Annuity Income.

Once you figure the excludable amount for a full year it does not change, so you will not have to refigure the amount to exclude each full year. In making this computation, you can get help from the Internal Revenue Service as well as from the payer of the annuity or pension.

If you did not contribute to the cost of your pension or annuity, or your employer did not withhold part of the contract cost from your pay while you worked, the amounts you receive each year are fully taxable. Report your annuity on Form 1040, line 17, instead of Schedule E.

After

Purpose

Use Schedule E to report income (or loss) from pensions and annuities, rents and royalties, partnerships, estates and trusts, and small business corporations.

Part I

Pension and Annuity Income

Note: For more information about pension and annuity income, see **Publication 575,** *Pension and Annuity Income.*

Generally, you must use Schedule E to report pension and annuity income if the amount of that income which you received in 1979 is not fully taxable. There are three methods of reporting your pension or annuity income.

Method 1

The pension or annuity payments you receive are fully taxable if:

- You did not make any contributions (including contributions withheld from your salary) to your pension or annuity, or

These next examples are from Form 4684 - Casualties and Theft. The original purpose section, which was not very explanatory, has been replaced with a true explanation of the purpose of the form:

Before	After

Before

Purpose of this Form.—Form 4684 gives general instructions for casualties and thefts. It may eliminate the need for completing part or all of Section A of Part I, Form 4797, Supplemental Schedule of Gains and Losses. Attach Form 4684, or a statement that shows your computation, to Form 1040.

After

Purpose of Form:

Use this form to figure your gain or loss from casualty or theft if:

- More than one item was lost or damaged by one or more casualties or thefts,
- You had more than one casualty or theft during the tax year, or
- The casualty or theft was to trade, business or income-producing property.

Use Part I to figure your gain or loss. Use a separate column for each item lost or destroyed by one casualty or theft. Attach additional sheets if [illegible]cessary. If you had more [illegible]an one ca[illegible] [illegible]r theft [illegible] the tax [illegible]ake [illegible]or[illegible]

In the "Before" version, a very confusing and contradictory explanation of how to treat casualties and thefts has been replaced by a simple and well-laid-out list.

Before

A. Casualties and Thefts, in General.—Generally, losses and gains from casualty or theft will receive different treatment. See instruction C for treatment of a gain from a casualty or a theft.

Any loss arising from fire, storm, shipwreck, or other casualty may be a casualty loss deduction. A theft loss may be deductible. It includes larceny, embezzlement, and robbery.

After

Casualty or Theft Losses You May Deduct

You may deduct any loss arising from:

- fire
- storm
- shipwreck
- other casualty
- theft (for example, larceny, embezzlement, and robbery)
- damage to a car that is not the result of a willful act or willful negligence of the driver

Although the explanations in the new form tended to be longer than those in the old instructions, we also eliminated redundant and extraneous information. This made the new version much shorter than the old one, and allowed us to add line-by-line instructions.

EXAMPLE 4
Simplifying the Basic Grant Application Form:
Department of Education, Office of Student Financial Assistance

Why We Selected This Project

More than five million students apply every year for Federal grants to pay for their postsecondary education. In the past, many applicants have had problems with the Basic Grant form and instructions. Thirty-four percent of the 1979-1980 Basic Grant applications (and 45% of the applications using the College Scholarship Service's form) could not be processed because students (or their parents) did not fill out the forms correctly. Some applicants had to return their forms four or five times before the answers were complete or consistent enough to be accepted. Some gave up trying.

The Basic Grant is an entitlement program meant to provide help to those least able to pay for further education. Students who demonstrate financial need, who meet other criteria for eligibility <u>and who fill out a complete, correct application</u> are awarded a grant. If the complexity of the form and instructions keeps eligible students or their families from applying, the students lose out on money to which they are otherwise entitled. Those who need the money most are often those who find the form most difficult.

What We Did

The Document Design Project worked with the Basic Grant Branch in the Spring of 1979 to simplify the financial aid package. Together we reorganized and simplified the wording of the introductory information. We introduced color coding to help students and parents find their separate paths through the form. We reordered the financial questions to allow students

and parents who do not file an income tax return to skip questions that they are not required to answer. We helped people prepare to fill out the forms by telling them what other material they would need to fill out the forms.

All of these changes reduce the burden the form places on the applicant, resulting in large savings of time and frustration. In the year after these changes were introduced, the error rate fell significantly.

Document Design Project research has shown that section headings, which are usually noun strings, often confuse people instead of helping them. Because readers are looking for answers to questions, writing the headings as questions helps the reader find the correct section quickly. Here is an example from the introductory information in the Basic Grant package.

Basic Grant before:

Student Eligibility

You will be eligible for a grant if you meet all of the following important criteria:

1. You have been determined to meet the Basic Grant financial need requirements.
2. You will be enrolled in an undergraduate course of study and have not previously received a Bachelor's degree from a institution.
3. Yo will at a half-time basis in

Basic Grant after:

Who can get a Basic Grant?

You can get a Basic Grant for 1980-81 if all these things are true:

1. You show that you have financial need—your education costs more than you can pay.
2. You are a U.S. citizen or an eligible noncitizen. (See page 4 for a list of eligible noncitizens.)
3. You do not e a Bachelor's degree.
4. Both and your program of study are elig meet require of the Basic

In the old Basic Grant package, the Instructions section began with several admonitions--not with any information that would help the reader get started. Instead of inviting people to apply, it seemed to be trying to turn them away.

Basic Grant before:

Instructions

It is important that you read the instructions while completing the form. If the form is completed correctly, your application can be processed without unnecessary delay.

Every attempt has been made to include only those questions that are absolutely necessary. All information will, of course, be treated confidentially.

Your application must be complete and accurate. Students receiving Basic Grants based on incorrect information submitted on the application will have to repay any funds received and may also be subject to further penalty.

ALL QUESTIONS MUST BE COMPLETED, EXCEPT FOR 5, 7, 8,14 AND 53 WHICH ARE OPTIONAL.

In the new Basic Grant package, the Instructions begin by helping people gather together all the papers they will need to copy information from. This saves time and frustration later and helps people get organized for the tasks ahead.

Basic Grant after:

Instructions

Getting Ready

First, be sure you have read and understood the first few pages of this booklet.

Because you will need to give financial information for yourself and/or your family, you should get together these records:

— 1979 U.S. income tax return (Form 1040 or 1040A)
— W-2 Forms and other records of money earned in 1979
— Current bank statements
— Current mortgage information
— Records of medical or dental bills that were paid in 1979
— Business or farm records
— Records of veterans benefits or social security payments

EXAMPLE 5
Simplifying Forms for Immigrants: Immigration and Naturalization Service

Why We Selected This Project

The forms and documents that foreigners and immigrants must deal with in order to be permitted to stay, work, or study in the United States are particularly onerous for their audience. These documents suffer from many of the same defects as other bureaucratic documents--poor layout, tiny print, cramped writing spaces, and bureaucratic and legal jargon. But in addition, the people who must read, understand, and fill out the forms are usually not native speakers of English. Documents that would be difficult for native English speakers become enormous impediments for non-native English speakers. Since many of the foreigners who initially fill out these documents later become U.S. citizens or permanent residents, it seems a shame that their first contact with the U.S. government and its paperwork should be so unpleasant.

The DDP worked with INS staff to improve a form that affects both foreigners and Americans: the I-20 "Certificate of Eligibility" for foreign students. The audiences for this form are foreign students and also the foreign student advisors at American universities. In fact, most of the complaints that INS receives about this form come from the native-English-speaking foreign student advisors. They find the form illogically organized and too cramped for adequate answers. Working with INS staff and a representative from the National Association of Foreign Student Advisors (NAFSA), we also found that the form was asking the wrong questions, that it was very difficult to find specific information on the form, and that the language was far too difficult and bureaucratic for either of its intended audiences.

INS and DDP together reorganized several parts of the form. This can be seen from the differences on the first two pages of the old and new form that follow page 28. For example,

- We separated the student's income and expenses into different sections.
- We placed Remarks (#8) before the certification (#7), so that the school official's signature could logically follow the certification.
- We arranged the various small boxes on the page to eliminate wasted space, which allowed us to increase the type size to make the text more readable.
- We eliminated outdated and irrelevant content.
- We reordered, simplified, and clarified the information on all the pages.
- We added informative headings throughout (see especially page 2), and used bold-face type to highlight headings and important information.

The revised I-20 form was approved by INS, the State Department, and the Justice Department in the autumn of 1981, and is now officially in use.

BEFORE

FORM APPROVED
OMB. NO. 43-R0387

CERTIFICATE OF ELIGIBILITY

(FOR NONIMMIGRANT "F-1" STUDENT STATUS)

Name of Student—Family Name (Capital Letters)	First Name	Middle Name
Date of Birth (Mo., day, year)	Country of Birth	Country of Nationality

READ CAREFULLY THE INSTRUCTIONS ON PAGE 4

Name of School
School Official To Be Notified of Student's Arrival in U.S.
Address of School (Include Zip Code)

Visa Issuing Post

It is hereby certified as follows:

1. This certificate is being issued to the student for: (Check one)
   a. ☐ Initial attendance at this school. b. ☐ Continuation after a temporary absence outside the United States. The student's authorized stay, as it appears on Form I-94 in the student's possession, expires (month, day, year) ________ c. ☐ Other (specify) ________
2. The student named has been accepted for a full course of study in this school. (If the student must appear on or before a specified date, specify that date here ________.) The student will be expected to carry a full program of study as defined by Immigration regulation, 8 CFR 214.2(f)(1a), and this institution. (Schools which devote themselves exclusively or primarily to vocational, business, or language instruction must complete the following: The student will be expected to carry a minimum of ____ clock hours a week.) The student's major field of study is ________, normally requiring (specify length of proposed course) ________ and will be expected to complete the required studies at this institution not later than ________.
3. The school has determined by a careful evaluation of the student's qualifications that the student has sufficient scholastic preparation to undertake a full course of study.
4. (Check one and fill in as appropriate.)
   a. ☐ Proficiency in the English language is required and the school has determined that the student has the required proficiency. Basis for determination ________
   b. ☐ Proficiency in the English language is required. If the student lacks such proficiency, the student will be:
      ☐ Enrolled in a full course of study of English in this school.
      ☐ Given special instruction in English, which will consist of ________
   c. ☐ Proficiency in the English language is not required. Explain: ________

5a. The present academic-year (or other academic-term of ____ months) cost for tuition and fee is $____; the average academic-year (or other academic-term) cost for living and incidental expenses is estimated to be $____. Total cost for academic-year (or other academic-term) is estimated to be $____. (Expenses for the summer period are not included in these figures.)

b. Estimated cost of living and incidental expenses for the summer period (or other non-academic period) of ____ months is $____.

6. The student expects to meet the expenses estimated in item 5a and 5b above by completing the following (check and fill in as appropriate): (Amount / Academic Year or other terms of ____ months)
   ☐ Scholarship/grant/assistantship from this school at $____ per ____ until ____ $____
   ☐ The student has been offered campus employment which will not displace a U.S. resident and will not affect the student's ability to carry a full course of study. The rate of pay is $____ per ____ $____ (enter estimated pay for academic year)
   ☐ Scholarship/grant/loan from another source (specify source: ________) at $____ per ____ until ____ $____
   ☐ Personal or family funds (this school has received verification that these funds are available). $____
   ☐ Summer or other non-academic year expenses will be met by (explain) ________ $____

   Total: (Must at least equal items 5a and 5b above.) $____

7. This school (or if approval not in its own name, the ________ School District under which it operates or ________ School of which it is a part) was approved for attendance by nonimmigrant students by the Immigration and Naturalization Service on ________, file number ________. Such approval has not been revoked.
8. REMARKS ________

For Immigration official

Signature of school official authorized by the school to issue Forms I-20A. I certify that the above information is true and correct.	
Title	Date of Issuance: (This certificate expires 12 months after the date of issuance)

29 34

CERTIFICATE BY NONIMMIGRANT STUDENT UNDER SECTION 101 (a) (15) (F) (i) OF THE IMMIGRATION AND NATIONALITY ACT

1. I seek to enter or remain in the United States temporarily and solely for the purpose of pursuing a full course of study at the school named on page 1 of this form.

2. Please print name in full	3. My maximum anticipated stay is (Months or Years)
4. My educational objective is	
5. I am financially able to support myself for the entire period of my stay in the United States while pursuing a full course of study. (State source and amount of support:) (Documentary evidence of means of actual support must be attached to this form)	
6. I last attended (Name of School) (City) (State) (Country)	
7. My major field of studies was	8. I completed such studies on (Date)

9. The person most closely related to me who lives outside the United States is: (Name)	(Relationship)	(Address)
10. The person most closely related to me who lives in the United States is: (If you have no relative in the United States, give the name of a friend.) (Name)	(Relationship)	(Address)

11. I understand the following:

a. A nonimmigrant student applying for admission to the United States for the first time after being issued an F-1 (student's) visa, will not be admitted unless the student intends to attend the school specified in that visa. Therefore, if before departing for the United States the student decides to attend some other school, the student should communicate with the issuing American consular office for the purpose of having such other school specified in the visa. Any other nonimmigrant student will not be admitted to the United States unless the student intends to attend the school specified in the Form I-20 or Form I-94 which is presented to the immigration officer at the port of entry.

b. A nonimmigrant student is not permitted to work off-campus for a wage or salary or engage in business while in the United States unless permission to do so has first been granted by the Immigration and Naturalization Service. A student who requires employment (1) because of economic necessity due to unforeseen circumstances arising after admission, or (2) to obtain practical training, may apply to the Immigration and Naturalization Service on Form I-538 for permission to accept such employment. Additional information concerning employment is set forth in Form I-538. The alien spouse or child accompanying or following to join a nonimmigrant student is not permitted to work in the United States.

c. A nonimmigrant student is permitted to remain in the United States only while maintaining nonimmigrant student status, and in any event not longer than the period fixed at the time of admission (or change to student classification) unless the student applies to the Immigration and Naturalization Service on Form I-538 in accordance with the instructions on that form between 15 and 30 days prior to the expiration of the period of authorized stay and obtains an extension of stay.

d. Each year, every nonimmigrant student in the United States on the first day of January must submit by the 31st of January a written notice of it's address to the Immigration and Naturalization Service. In addition, a notice must be sent within 10 days after every change of address. Regardless of whether the student moves, each nonimmigrant student is required to file written notice of his/her address every 3 months. Printed forms obtainable to the United States immigration office or post office should be used in making the annual address report, the change of address report, and the 3-month address report.

e. At the time a nonimmigrant student departs from the United States, the temporary entry permit (Form I-94) is to be surrendered to a representative of the steamship or airline if departing via a seaport or airport, to a Canadian immigration officer if departing across the Canadian border, or to a United States immigration officer if departing across the Mexican border.

f. A nonimmigrant student may remain in the United States temporarily only for the purpose of pursuing a full course of study at a specified school. If, after being admitted the student desires to transfer to another school, the student must make written application on Form I-538 for permission to make such a transfer. The application must be submitted to the office of the Immigration and Naturalization Service having jurisdiction over the area in which the school from which the student wishes to transfer is located. The application must be accompanied by Form I-20 completed by the school to which the student wishes to transfer. The student may not transfer until the application is approved. The application will be denied if the student failed to actually take a full course of study at the school the student was last authorized by the Service to attend, unless the student establishes that failure to do so was due to circumstances beyond it's control or was otherwise justified.

g. A student who seeks to re-enter the United States as a nonimmigrant student after a temporary absence must be in possession of the following documents: (i) A valid unexpired student visa (unless exempt from visa requirements); (ii) A passport valid for six months beyond the period of readmission (unless exempt from passport requirements); (iii) A current copy of Form I-20 (A and B). However, only the "A" copy of Form I-20 is required in the case of a nonimmigrant student returning from temporary absence outside the United States to continue attendance at the same school which the Immigration and Naturalization Service last authorized the student to attend; in such case, Form I-20A may be retained by the student and used for any number of reentries within twelve months from the date of issuance, the certificate on page 2 of Form I-20A need not be completed, and Form I-20B should be destroyed.

h. A nonimmigrant student who does not register at the school specified in the temporary entry permit (Form I-94), or whose school attendance is terminated, or who takes less than a full course of study, or who accepts unauthorized employment, thereby fails to maintain status and must depart from the United States immediately.

I CERTIFY THAT THE ABOVE IS CORRECT. I hereby agree to comply with the above and any other terms and conditions of my admission and any extension of stay. I hereby authorize the named school and any school to which I may subsequently transfer to release to the Immigration and Naturalization Service any information from my education records which the Service needs to know in order to determine if I am maintaining the lawful nonimmigrant status in which I was admitted to the United States under the immigration law. More specifically, I authorize the school to report, in writing, to the Immigration and Naturalization Service if I fail to register within 60 days of the time expected, if I fail to carry a full course of study, if I fail to attend classes to the extent normally required, if I am failing courses, if I become employed or if I terminate attendance at the named school and to provide the Service upon demand with my latest address.

Signature of Student	Address (City)	(State or Province)	(Country)	(Date)
(Signature of Parent or Guardian if Student is Under 18 Years of Age)	(Address)		(Relationship)	(Date)

U.S. Department of Justice
Immigration and Naturalization Service
Please read instructions on PAGE 4

AFTER

Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant (F-1) Student Status

Form Approved
OMB. No. RO397

010087 B

This page must be completed and signed in the U.S. by an authorized school official.

Name of Student—Family Name (Capital Letters)	Given Name	Middle Name

Date of Birth (Mo., day, year)	Country of Birth	Country of Nationality

Name of School

School Official to be notified of student's arrival in U.S. (Name and Title)

Address of School (Include Zip Code)

Visa Issuing Post

For Immigration Official

1. **This certificate is issued to the student named above for** (check and fill out as appropriate):
   - ☐ Initial attendance at this school.
   - ☐ Continued attendance at this school after a temporary absence from the United States, or
   - ☐ Use by spouse and/or children in acquiring nonimmigrant F-2 classification.
     The student's authorized stay, as it appears on his/her Form I-94, expires on (date): ____________
   - ☐ Other (specify): ____________

2. **The student named above has been accepted for a full course of study at this institution** (complete each of the following):
   Majoring in the field of ____________
   The student is expected to report to the school not later than (date) ____________, and complete studies not later than (date) ____________.

3. **Proficiency in the English language** ☐ is ☐ is not required (check and fill out as appropriate):
   - ☐ The school has determined that the student has the required proficiency.
   - ☐ If the student is not yet proficient, he or she will be given instruction consisting of ____________.
   - ☐ English IS NOT a requirement (explain): ____________

4. **This school estimates the student's average MONTHLY costs to be the following:**
   Tuition and fees $ ________
   Living expenses $ ________
   Expenses of dependent(s): $ ________
   Other (specify): $ ________ TOTAL $ ________

5. **This school has information showing the following as the student's means of support, estimated on a MONTHLY basis:**
   Personal funds of the student: $ ________
   Family funds from abroad: $ ________
   Funds from this school
   (Specify type): ________ $ ________
   Funds from another source
   (Specify type/source): ________ $ ________
   On-campus employment, if applicable: $ ________ TOTAL $ ________

6. **Remarks** (complete as appropriate): ____________

7. **This school is approved by the Immigration and Naturalization Service for attendance by nonimmigrant students** (fill out all blanks):
   Under the name of (School/School District) ____________,
   Approval was granted on (date) ________ and the school was given the file number of ________.

I CERTIFY under penalty of law that:
All information provided above was completed before I signed this form, and is true and correct to the best of my knowledge;
The school has determined that the above-named student's qualifications meet all standards for admission to the school;
The student will be required to pursue a full course of study as defined by 8 CFR 214.2(f)(1a); and
I am a designated official of the above named school and I am authorized to issue this form.

Signature of School Official	Title	Date Issued	Place Issued (city and state)

I-20A (REV. 2/14/81)Y

I-20A Student

on PAGE 4 — Under Section 101 (a) (15) (F) (i) of the Immigration and Nationality Act

1. My full name is: (Family name) (Given name) (Middle name)	**2.** My anticipated stay is (months or years):
3. My educational objective is: (Degree or certificate sought; Major field of study)	**4.** My passport was issued by (country): and the number on it is:

5. I am financially able to support myself for the entire period of my stay in the United States while pursuing a full course of study, by: (State source and amount of support—Documentary evidence of means of actual support must be attached to this form):

6. I last attended (Name of school) (City) (State) (Country)

7. My major field of studies was:	**8.** I completed those studies on: (Date)

9. The person most closely related to me who lives OUTSIDE the United States is (Name): (Relationship): (Address):

10. The person most closely related to me who lives IN the United States is: (If you have no relative in the U.S., give the name of a friend.) (Family name): (Given name): (Middle name): (Relationship): (Address):

11. PLEASE READ CAREFULLY, and be sure that you understand the following, before signing below:

A. SCHOOL If I am applying for entry to the United States for the first time after being issued an F-1 visa, I will not be admitted unless I plan to attend the school specified in that visa. If, before I depart for the United States, I decide to attend another school, I will present an I-20 from that school to the issuing Consular office to have that school specified in my visa.

B. EMPLOYMENT I am not permitted to work off-campus or to engage in business unless I have received permission to do so from the Immigration and Naturalization Service. If I require employment, I may apply for permission to work (on Form I-538). My application must be based on financial need arising after receiving student status, or the need to obtain practical training. My alien spouse or child (F-2 Classification) may not work in the United States.

C. PERIOD OF STAY I am permitted to remain in the United States only while maintaining nonimmigrant student status. I must also maintain a passport which is valid for a period of no less than 6 months, unless exempt from passport requirements. I may not stay longer than authorized on my Form I-94, unless I apply to the Immigration and Naturalization Service (On Form I-538) for an extension. To get an extension, I must apply between 15 and 60 days before the date that my authorized stay expires. I may stay while the application is being processed and if it is approved, until the expiration of the extension.

D. NOTICE OF ADDRESS Each year I am in the United States on the first day of January, I must submit, by the 31st day of January, a notice of my address to the Immigration and Naturalization Service. I must also send a notice within 10 days after any change of address. Regardless of whether I move, I must file a notice of my address every 3 months. (The forms to be used to make each of the reports are available at any United States Immigration Office or Post Office.)

E. ARRIVAL/ DEPARTURE When I depart from the United States, I must give my "Arrival-Departure Record" (Form I-94) to a representative of the steamship or airline if I leave via a seaport or airport, to a Canadian Immigration Officer if I leave across the Canadian border, or to a United States Immigration Officer if I leave across the Mexican border. However, I may keep my I-94 for reentering the United States from Mexico or Canada, or from adjacent islands other than Cuba, if I return to the U.S. within 30 days.

F. SCHOOL TRANSFER I may remain in the United States only to pursue a full course of study at a specified school. If, after being admitted, I want to transfer to another school, I must first apply (on Form I-538) and be granted permission to do so. The application must be submitted to the Immigration and Naturalization Service Office having jurisdiction over the school from which I wish to transfer. A Form I-20, completed by the school to which I wish to transfer, must be with my application. My application will be denied if I have not taken a full course of study at the school I was last authorized to attend, unless I establish that failure to do so was beyond my control or was otherwise justified.

G. RE-ENTRY If I want to reenter the United States as a nonimmigrant student, after a temporary absence, I must be in possession of the following: (1) A valid student visa, unless I am exempt from visa requirements; (2) a passport valid for at least 6 months beyond the period of readmission, unless I am exempt from passport requirements; and (3) a current copy of Form I-20A and I-20B. (Only the "A" copy of Form I-20 is required if I am returning from a temporary absence from the United States, to continue studies at the school which the Immigration and Naturalization Service last authorized me to attend.)

H. PENALTY If I do not register at the school named in my "Arrival-Departure Record" (Form I-94), or if I stop attending school, or take less than a full course of study, or accept unauthorized employment, I fail to maintain my status and may be deported from the United States.

I AUTHORIZE the named school, and any school to which I transfer, to release any information from my records which is needed to determine if I am maintaining the lawful status in which I was admitted to the United States. I further authorize the school to report to the Immigration and Naturalization Service if I fail to register within 60 days of the time expected, to carry a full course of study, or to attend classes to the extent required, or if I become employed and/or terminate attendance at the school. The school is authorized to provide the Service with my name, country of birth, current address, and any other directory information on a regular basis or upon request.

I CERTIFY that all information provided on this form refers specifically to me and is true and correct to the best of my knowledge. I certify that I seek to enter or remain in the United States temporarily, and solely for the purpose of pursuing a full course of study at the school named on Page 1 of this form.

I AGREE to comply with the above terms and with any other conditions of my admission, and those of any extension of stay.

Signature of Student | Address (City) | (State or Province) | (Country) | (Date)

Signature of Parent or Guardian if Student is under 18 years of age | (Relationship) | Address (City) | (State or Province) | (Country) | (Date)

EXAMPLE 8
Making Patient Consent Forms Clearer:
National Institutes of Health

Why We Selected This Project

Much of the medical research at NIH depends on having people participate in studies that investigate how the body works and that determine the effects of new drugs and treatments. An important element in this research is the informed consent of participants. Researchers use patient consent forms (also called protocols) to explain what will be done to participants in the study, to inform participants of possible risks and side effects, and to obtain the participants' consent. These protocols are often poorly written and too technical for the lay person to understand. Because very serious side effects are possible in many of these studies, informed consent is important to both the patient and the researcher.

What We Did

The Document Design Project worked with NIH to make these protocols easier for patients to understand, and to improve the skills of the doctors who are, and will be, writing these protocols. As a first step in this project the DDP reviewed over sixty NIH protocols for organization, language, tone, and overall clarity. The review involved editing the protocols and noting suggested changes on the page, and occasionally, rewriting whole sections of a protocol. Because some sections of these protocols are identical (e.g., introduction, payment, signature section) regardless of the type of study, we also developed a model for these portions of the protocol.

As the next step in the project, we developed a set of draft guidelines on how to organize and write clear protocols.

The guidelines are specifically geared to the researchers who write NIH protocols, and respond to problems DDP staff have found in many of the consent forms. The guidelines use examples drawn from the protocols as well as the model form of the standard sections.

Examples of Problems in NIH Protocols: Among the problems that we found in many of the protocols are poor organization, impersonal and abstract sentence structures, and technical terms used without any explanation. For example, protocols use abstract language for concrete situations:

Before: the lack of maintenance of normal blood pressure in response to assumption of upright posture

After: the body cannot maintain normal blood pressure when the person stands up

Before: Some discomfort from venipuncture and intravenous injection may be expected and there is some possibility of local bruising.

After: You may feel some discomfort from venipuncture (a needle inserted into your vein) and intravenous injection. There is also some possibility of bruising in the area of the injection.

39

When one sentence contains several types of impersonal constructions and abstract phrases, it becomes very difficult to understand. The reader has difficulty translating the sentence into a picture that tells what will happen to him or her. Here is how we rewrote one very abstract, impersonal sentence in an NIH protocol.

Before: The primary concern about any combination of drugs would again be the low blood pressure effect which will be carefully monitored and the study stopped if there were any indication of low blood pressure beyond the normal limits, or any other side effects.

After: The main problem with using any combination of drugs would be the possibility of causing low blood pressure. We will carefully monitor your blood pressure and stop the study if there is any indication of serious low blood pressure, or any other adverse side effects.

This project led directly to another technical assistance project involving assent forms for children (see Section III--Summary of Each Project).

EXAMPLE 7

Workshops

A. A Three-Day Course for Writers

The Document Design Project created a three-day course for writers and designers who want to make their materials simpler and clearer. The course, called Simplifying Documents, follows a model of the process a person must go through in any writing task. This model was first presented in AIR's proposal for the Document Design Project. Following the model, we cover these topics in the workshop:

Before you write:

- Do you really need a new document?
- What purpose will it serve?
- Who will use your document?
- What will they do with it?
- What constraints must you work with?

When you write:

- Selecting the appropriate content
- Organizing for your audience and purpose
- Writing in clear English
- Using graphics to improve your document

After you write:

- Editing, reviewing, and revising
- How to find out if your document works
- Readability formulas--and their limitations
- Other evaluation techniques

The workshop in Simplifying Documents is not a lecture course, but a "how-to, hands-on" workshop. At different times the workshop includes direct teaching to the whole group, group discussions, and exercises done in small groups or individually. While exercises in writing, rewriting, and editing are the core of this course, the course stresses the process that begins with thinking about what you are writing, whom you are writing it for, and why you are writing it. An important aspect of the workshop that is not covered in most clear writing workshops

is a discussion of how to work within a system. We discuss constraints (time, budget, review process) that the system imposes and give specific ideas for coping successfully with the needs of the organization.

Other innovative features of the course developed by the Document Design Project are graphics and evaluation. The DDP model insists that you do not have a final document until you have tried it out with the intended audiences.

All the examples and the exercises come from government documents, regulations, notices, manuals, forms, brochures, and letters. In 1979, the Document Design Project piloted the course twice. Each session was completely filled within two weeks after announcements were sent out. To reach as many agencies as possible, we had to limit enrollment to no more than two people from any one group. We trained 42 people from 15 agencies in two pilot sessions of the workshop. Participants rated the workshop very highly on all the aspects of the course. Follow-up studies indicate that participants continue to use the guidelines from the workshop. TA projects have come out of the workshops, and the workshops have been used as training for people with whom we were already involved on TA projects.

The 100-page manual with notes, guidelines, examples, and exercises has attracted a good deal of interest beyond the workshop participants.

B. A Half-Day Workshop for Managers

Many of the writers whom we trained in the three-day course suggested that their supervisors would be more supportive of their efforts to simplify material if we trained the supervisors. In the second year of the Document Design Project, we created a three-hour workshop for Branch and Bureau Chiefs, General Counsels, and SES-level executives who oversee plain language projects.

The half-day course covers these topics:

- Why simplify government documents?
- What do we mean by language simplification?
- Steps in a document simplification project
- Producing the document
  --How to get started
  --How to analyze a poor document
  --How to organize and write a good document
  --How to use graphics effectively
- Reviewing the document
- Evaluating the document

Each participant received a three-ring binder with a 27-page narrative, handouts, exercises, and examples that we referred to in the workshop.

We shortened and revised our material after an initial pilot test at the Federal Trade Commission. The second pilot test at the Federal Communications Commission in September 1980 received uniformly high praise from all participants.

We presented final versions of the managers' workshop to two different agencies early in 1981. In January, we presented the workshop to 25 managerial-level staff at the Office of Student Financial Assistance (OSFA). The focus of this workshop was on forms design. OSFA found the course so valuable that they sent copies of the workshop manual to every state agency that creates guaranteed student loan forms.

In March, 1981, we presented another version of the workshop for managers to 25 SES-level staff of the Bureau of Medical Devices at the Food and Drug Administration. This workshop, too, was very well received.

III. Summary of Each Project

At the bottom of each summary, we have given the name and phone number of the contact person with whom we worked at the time we were doing the project. We are aware that, in some cases, these people no longer work in that agency.

Agency

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)
Food and Nutrition Service

Description of the Project

We worked with Food and Nutrition Service staff to design and evaluate a new brochure for people who need food stamps. With training and support from DDP, FNS staff completed two drafts of a brochure entitled The Food Stamp Program and did a comparison evaluation. This group at the Department of Agriculture has continued to use the techniques that they learned from the Document Design Project and has become an advocacy group within USDA for evaluating documents.

Contact Person at the Agency

Debbie Massey, Office of Public Information, 202/447-6659

Agency

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)
Food Safety and Quality Service (FSQS)

Description of the Project

We worked with several FSQS staff members to turn an old, informal set of guidelines (the FSQS "Quality Book") into a clear regulation. The Quality Book tells canners and food processors the minimum percentage of meat, poultry, or fish that must be present in a given packaged food. Before this, the information did not exist in a form that food processors had easy access to. They were required to meet the standards without really having a clear statement of the standards.

Contact Person at the Agency

Paul Ragan, Food Safety and Quality Service, 202/447-7745

Agency

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)
Food and Nutrition Service (FNS)

Description of the Project

The Food and Nutrition Service of USDA published a brochure entitled How to Apply for and Use Food Stamps. As part of a project to assess the usefulness of this brochure, the Food and Nutrition Service asked the DDP to help evaluate the distribution system for the brochure. We helped FNS develop the evaluation instrument, as well as procedures for collecting and analyzing the data.

Contact Person at the Agency

Debbie Massey, 202/447-6659

Agency

U.S. Bureau of the Census

Description of the Project

The Census Bureau asked for our expert advice on how to improve their in-house translation procedures and for our help in developing a systematic plan for translating. We studied their translation activities and procedures and then gave several presentations to their Task Force on the Spanish forms. We worked with the Task Force to set up consistent procedures for translating Census documents into Spanish for U.S. Hispanics.

Contact Person at the Agency

Antonio Rendon, 202/763-1810

Agency

Department of Education (ED)
Office of Student Financial Assistance (OSFA)

Description of the Project

OSFA staff approached us for help in simplifying the Basic Educational Opportunity Grant (BEOG) form that is used by students seeking government grants for post-secondary education. We performed a detailed analysis of the language and design of the 1979-1980 Basic Grant application form. Based on our recommendations, the agency made major changes in the 1980-1981 BEOG packet, especially in the information and instructions. Preliminary evidence showed that the rate at which the computer rejects applications had gone down about 7%. Leo Kornfeld, Deputy Commissioner for Student Financial Assistance at the time we did this work, sent a letter of appreciation for this "outstanding work," and Higher Education Daily highlighted AIR's report in its issue of May 3, 1979.

Contact Person at the Agency

Gregory Blair, 202/472-4300

Agency

Federal Communications Commission (FCC)
Office of Consumer Assistance

Description of the Project

The FCC Office of Consumer Assistance was preparing a book that would tell consumers how they can participate in regulating broadcasting. This guide is a restatement of the Federal Register form of the regulations for consumers (rather than for lawyers). DDP reviewed a draft manuscript and recommended changes but the project was already too far along for the agency to act on some of our suggestions.

Contact Person at the Agency

Belle Brook O'Brien, 202/632-7000

Agency

Federal Communications Commission (FCC)
Radio Broadcast Service

Description of the Project

Following their successful rewriting of the Citizens' Band (CB) Radio Rules, the FCC rewrote their regulations for radios in recreational boats. They asked us to help them evaluate the Marine Radio regulations, to find out whether the rewritten rules are, in fact, easier to understand and use than the original rules. We helped FCC develop the test questions and the research design, and to tabulate and interpret the results. The evaluation showed that the rewritten regulations are significantly easier for people to use and understand than the original regulations were.

Contact Person at the Agency

Joseph Johnson, 202/632-6930

Agency

Federal Trade Commission (FTC)
Office of the General Counsel

Description of the Project

The FTC has a program, authorized by Congress, that allows the agency to reimburse qualified individuals and groups for the costs of participating in the rulemaking process. The agency originally published two pamphlets. One, explaining the context of and basis for the program, is written in a very formal style. The other, meant to explain "how to apply" is written in a direct, personal style. We worked with the Office of the General Counsel at the FTC to consolidate these two booklets into one document that both lawyers and consumers can read, that is logically organized, that has a uniform style and voice, and that tells readers about the program, the criteria for participating, and how to apply.

Contact Person at the Agency

Bonnie Naradzay, 202/357-0258

Agency

Food and Drug Administration (FDA)
Bureau of Drugs

Description of the Project

At the agency's request, we analyzed four versions of a PPI (patient packet insert) for Valium, to help the agency decide which format, language, and organization would be most effective. We produced a report of this analysis, entitled Differences in the Language and Design of Four PPIs for Valium, which is available from DDP and from the National Technical Information Service (NTIS). The report can serve as a model to follow for analyzing any type of document.

Contact Person at the Agency

Dr. Louis Morris, 202/443-4893

Agency

Food and Drug Administration (FDA)
Bureau of Drugs

Description of the Project

On January 3, 1979, we held a half-day workshop for the staff of the group at FDA that funds research and makes rules on how drug companies must write patient package inserts (PPIs). We covered techniques of organization, language, sentence structure, format, and graphics as they apply to PPIs and other drug information intended for consumers.

Contact Person at the Agency

Steven Moore, 202/443-4893

Agency

Food and Drug Administration (FDA)
Bureau of Drugs

Description of the Project

In September, 1980, the Food and Drug Administration published a rule which proposed the text for patient package inserts (PPIs) for 10 prescription drugs belonging to 10 different drug classes. At the request of FDA, DDP staff reviewed and critiqued the language and organization of the proposed PPIs, and sent suggestions for improving the PPIs to FDA.

Contact Person at the Agency

Dr. Louis Morris, 202/443-4893

Agency

Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA)

Description of the Project

The Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA) had developed a State Medicaid Manual--instructions to the states on regulations and procedures for administering a Medicaid program on Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment. DDP reviewed the manual, and gave suggestions for making it clearer and for improving the format.

Contact Person at the Agency

Steve Leeds, 202/245-7684

Agency

Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)
Office of the General Counsel

Description of the Project

Three agencies of HHS produced a set of "model" regulations involving AFDC, Medicaid, and Social Services programs in an attempt to achieve consistency across agencies. Unfortunately, the model regulations still contained inconsistencies, and, in addition, were not organized or written as clearly as possible. We analyzed the regulations, and presented our analysis in an eight-page memo to HHS, making specific recommendations on changes in organization, syntax, and word choice (particularly to avoid sexist language and misuse of "shall").

Contact Person at the Agency

Terry Dowd, Operation Common Sense, 202/245-6733

Agency

Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)

Description of the Project

The lawyer we worked with on a technical assistance project for the Federal Trade Commission was asked by the Department of Health and Human Services to work on a similar task for them. The task was to produce a draft of a notice for a demonstration project in which interested persons could be reimbursed for their expenses in participating in the rulemaking process. The FTC lawyer incorporated all that she had learned in her previous project with us into her draft. In addition, with the approval of HHS, we worked with her to improve the notice.

Contact Person at the Agency

Bonnie Naradzay, 202/357-0258

Agency

Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
Office of Regulations

Description of the Project

The HUD Privacy Act Regulations (24 CFR 16) are meant for a broad audience including the general public, but they were poorly organized, poorly written, and filled with references to documents that are inaccessible to the general public. We worked with a HUD lawyer, helping him to reorganize and rewrite the Privacy Act Regulations. The rewritten regulations are clear, personal, and well-written. The revised rule was published for public comment in the Federal Register of July 21, 1980. In the preamble to the proposed rule, HUD cited the help of the Document Design Project in reorganizing and rewriting the rule.

Contact Person at the Agency

William Granik, 202/755-5570

Agency

Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

Description of the Project

Over a period of several months in 1979, we assisted a researcher at HUD in developing an evaluation for a HUD loan recasting agreement--an agreement form for renegotiating Federally subsidized housing loans. HUD had developed a plain English version of the agreement, but needed assistance in testing it. We helped design the evaluation and the test instrument, and late in 1979, the HUD researcher and an associate at the University of South Florida collected and analyzed the data. They found a significant increase in subjects' understanding of their rights and responsibilities with the revised form.

In a memorandum to the President, former Secretary of Housing Landrieu noted AIR's contribution to this project.

Contact Person at the Agency

Robert Wulff, 202/755-5353

61

Agency

Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS)
Forms Control

Description of the Project

INS form I-20, "Certificate of Eligibility (for Nonimmigrant 'F-1' Student Status)," is a form which foreign student advisors must fill out and which foreign students must have in order to attend college in the U.S. The form was badly organized, and the legalistic language was difficult for both native and non-native speakers of English to understand. It was also graphically poor--full of very fine print, lacking headings, etc. We worked with INS staff to revise the organization, language, and graphics of the 5-page form. The revised form was published in September, 1981, and is now in use.

Contact Person at the Agency

Judith Miller, 202/633-3291

Agency

Interagency Council on Citizen Participation

Description of the Project

The Interagency Council on Citizen Participation (ICCP) is an organization open to federal and non-federal employees interested in furthering the goals of consumer and public participation in Federal agency activities. The ICCP asked DDP to help organize a steering committee of federal employees and community members to plan a series of presentations on the issue of Hispanic participation in Federal programs. From the steering committee efforts developed the Hispanic Outreach Program, now an integral part of ICCP. DDP helped plan two sessions: one included Congressman Garcia (D-N.Y.) and Raul Yzaguirre, President of the National Council of La Raza; the other was a panel of agency representatives. Thirty-four agencies sent representatives to the panel discussion.

Contact Person

Belle Brook O'Brien, President, ICCP, 202/632-7000

63

Agency

Internal Revenue Service (IRS)
Forms and Publications Division

Description of the Project

We worked with teams of writer-editors and tax law specialists once a week over several months. Together we reviewed and simplified the instructions and questions for forms 1040, 1040A, and 4684, and for Schedules A, B, C, E, R, and RP. We suggested changes such as putting a purpose section at the beginning of the instructions, and reorganizing forms so that they follow a logical sequence, as well as simplifying vocabulary and sentence structure. DDP received a letter of appreciation for this work from Robert Brauer, Chairman of the Tax Forms Coordinating Committee.

Contact Person at the Agency

Garrick Shear, 202/566-6253

Agency

Internal Revenue Service (IRS)
Taxpayer Services

Description of the Project

Once IRS had revised its 1979 tax forms--with our help--we assisted them in planning and conducting an evaluation of selected draft 1979 tax materials. We accompanied IRS staff to field sites to assist in the data collection, and then analyzed errors and comments from the respondents. IRS used the results in making further revisions to the 1979 tax forms and instructions.

Contact Person at the Agency

Mickey Alexander, 202/566-6353

Agency

Internal Revenue Service (IRS)
Forms and Publications Division

Description of the Project

We worked on a regular weekly basis with IRS staff who are responsible for Spanish-language forms and publications, helping them simplify the organization and language of IRS publication 579 S, "Guia para preparar la declaracion del impuesto federal sobres ingreso personal." A major change in the publication was to separate the instructions for form 1040 and form 1040A, so that users only have to read the part about the form they are filling out. We also simplified the language, and made recommendations on the use of Spanish terms for Hispanics in the U.S.

Contact Person in the Agency

Jake Briggs, Ernie Acosta, 202/566-7757

Agency

Internal Revenue Service
Taxpayer Publications

Description of the Project

The Internal Revenue Service publishes many booklets that give taxpayers more information than can be included in the instructions to the forms and schedules. In the spring of 1979, DDP helped a team of tax law specialists reorganize and rewrite Publication 590, Tax Information on Individual Retirement Arrangements. Major changes in organization, style, and use of technical vocabulary make the revised publication an example of how IRS can simplify its booklets as well as its instructions.

Contact Person at the Agency

Art Altman, 202/566-4960

Agency

Internal Revenue Service (IRS)
Taxpayer Services

Description of the Project

When a taxpayer has made an error on the tax return, IRS sends a notice telling the taxpayer how much is owed and by when it must be paid. With the availability of high speed printing by computers, IRS was considering changing from a pre-printed form for notices to a computer-printed form. IRS asked DDP to analyze the style and format of the new (computer-printed) notices. Our analysis showed that the forms printed by high speed computers were less readable than the pre-printed forms because the computer could not change type-face to separate headings from text, because important items of information were buried in running text where they were highlighted on the pre-printed forms, and because the high-speed printer produced small, broken type which was less legible than the type in the old notices. We presented these findings at a meeting attended by representatives of five IRS branches. After this meeting, IRS decided not to use the notices printed by high-speed computer.

Contact Person at the Agency

Ruth Hill, 202/566-8580

Agency

National Association for Volunteers in Criminal Justice

Description of the Project

The National Association for Volunteers in Criminal Justice has been preparing 12 booklets of guidelines on using volunteers to work in all aspects of the criminal justice system (e.g., working with inmates, juveniles, etc.). In May, 1981, we presented a one-day clear writing workshop for the Executive Board, the editors and writers who oversee the project, and the 12 principal writers of the guidelines. In our workshop, we applied DDP principles of clear writing to the texts that the participants were working on.

Contact Person at the Agency

David Gooch, Associate Director, 205/348-6738

Agency

National Bureau of Standards (NBS)
Center for Fire Research

Description of the Project

The Center for Fire Research at NBS asked for our help in designing forms and writing guidelines for filling out the forms. The forms are meant to be used by staff of group homes for the mentally retarded to rate residents of those homes for their ability to follow instructions and evacuate the building during a fire. We simplified the forms and made them easier to use, and worked with the NBS writer/researcher, improving his writing skills while rewriting the guidelines that accompany the forms.

Contact Person at the Agency

Norman Groner, 202/921-3175

Agency

National Institutes of Health (NIH)

Description of the Project

We analyzed and suggested rewrites for over 60 NIH "protocols"--medical consent forms that explain in detail the research studies in which NIH patients and volunteers are to participate. We have written a set of draft guidelines for NIH researchers, telling them how to write a well-organized and comprehensible protocol.

Contact Person in the Agency

Dr. Mortimer Lipsett, Director, The Clinical Center, 202/496-4114

Agency

National Institutes of Health (NIH)

Description of the Project

In the process of analyzing NIH protocols to see if they were clear and understandable, we discovered that many of the NIH assent forms for the children were unclear or inappropriate for their audience. (The NIH assent forms are similar to their protocol-plus-consent forms, except that children cannot legally give "consent"; they can only "assent".) We therefore wrote a set of guidelines for NIH researchers, explaining how to write assent forms that are understandable and appropriate for the children who take part in NIH research. The guidelines focus not only on choosing appropriate language (vocabulary and sentence structure) but also on understanding the conceptual and reasoning abilities of children, and gearing the concepts in the forms to those abilities.

Contact Person at the Agency

Dr. Mortimer Lipsett, 202/496-4114

Agency

New York City
Department of Consumer Affairs

Description of the Project

The New York City Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) receives many complaints every year about home improvement contractors. One-fourth to one-third of all DCA hearings are concerned with this problem, and many of the consumers who complain are elderly people who are trying to save on fuel bills. DDP worked with DCA to revise the law and regulations on home improvement contracting.

Contact Person at the Agency

Helen Rosenberg, 202/566-1359

73

Agency

Office of Personnel Management (OPM)

Description of the Project

OPM would like to revise the 171 form--the Personal Qualifications Statement that serves as a curriculum vitae/ application form for jobs in government agencies. The DDP was asked to be part of an interagency task force to revise the 171. We met several times with the task force and wrote a seven-page memo outlining the problems that people are likely to have with the instructions to the form and with the form itself. Several months later, we recommended ways of reorganizing and rewriting the form and instructions to eliminate those problems, and presented OPM with a graphic mock-up of a revised front page for the form.

Contact Person at the Agency

Judy Jaffie, 202/254-3074

Agency

U.S. Postal Service (USPS)
Consumer Services Division

Description of the Project

In the fall of 1979, the USPS asked us to recommend changes in the design and wording of a Consumer Service Card, to make it more understandable. This card is available in every Post Office for consumers to use if they have a complaint. Several hundred thousand such cards are filled out and sent in to USPS each year. Based on our suggestions, USPS came up with two designs for the card. We then advised them on an evaluation plan. Based on their evaluation, the Postal Service chose one of the designs, modified it, and distributed the new card nationwide.

Contact Person at the Agency

R. Jeffery, 202/245-4556.

Agency

U.S. Postal Service (USPS)
Consumer Services Division

Description of the Project

The Postal Service's Consumer Directory is a pamphlet that describes the services offered by the USPS. Millions of copies of this pamphlet are given out to consumers every year. At USPS' request, we analyzed the Consumer Directory from a linguistic and graphic point of view, suggesting changes to make it clearer and easier to use. The USPS incorporated most of our suggestions in the new version of the publication. The Assistant Postmaster General for Consumer Services was very favorably impressed with our work.

Contact Person at the Agency

Robert Jeffery, 202/245-4556

Agency

U.S. Postal Service (USPS)
Forms and Publications

Description of the Project

The Postal Service asked for our assistance in reorganizing and reformatting their enormous International Mail Publication, which is used by postal clerks to determine international mailing costs. We analyzed it for organization and graphics and interviewed postal workers to find out their problems in using it. We then made recommendations for improving the organization, layout and graphics, and provided USPS with mock-ups of several pages as models. The Postal Service has revised the publication based on our suggestions.

Contact Person at the Agency

Marguerite Boudreau, 202/245-5550.

Agency

Social Security Administration (SSA)
Office of Regulations

Description of the Project

At SSA's request, DDP reviewed and analyzed two rewritten SSA regulations and then held an afternoon workshop for the staff of the SSA's Office of Regulations. The workshop was entitled How to Analyze a Regulation, and its purpose was to show senior reviewers in the agency what to look for in a clear and simple regulation. We used the two rewritten regulations as examples in the workshop.

Contact Person at the Agency

James MacDonald, 301/594-6695

Agency

The White House
Consumer Affairs Council

Description of the Project

In the fall of 1979, former President Carter signed an executive order (12160, "Providing Enhancement and Coordination of Federal Consumer Programs") that required agencies to strengthen their consumer programs, and that established a Consumer Affairs Council in the White House. The new Council asked DDP for assistance in designing a Consumer Response Form for Federal agencies to use to solicit consumers' comments on the agencies' proposed consumer programs. The agencies would then use the information gathered on those forms in revising their consumer programs. The form that we helped to design was approved and published in the Federal Register (Monday, December 10, 1979). Esther Peterson, former Chairwoman of the Consumer Affairs Council, commended DDP for its work on the form.

Contact Person at the Agency

Gregory M. Jones, 202/456-2237

Agency

The White House
Consumer Affairs Council

Description of the Project

The White House Consumer Affairs Council regularly publishes a newsletter to inform consumers and consumer advocacy groups about legislation and agency activities that affect consumers. They asked DDP to help them develop a form to survey their readers about the newsletter so that they could better match the document to its audience. We devised a short questionnaire and designed a layout for it.

Contact Person at the Agency

Ms. Lou Cook, 202/755-8810

IV. Appendix

Letters of Appreciation

75001 File TA004

U.S. Treasury Department

Internal Revenue Service
Washington, DC 20224

Date: JAN 2[illegible] 1979 | In reply refer to: PR:O

Dr. Robert E. Krug, Vice President
American Institutes for Research
1055 Thomas Jefferson Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20007

Dear Bob:

I want to thank both you and Dr. ~~Reddish~~ Redish for your informative briefing to our Commissioner and Assistant Commissioners on the Document Design Project and on methodologies for evaluating forms and instructions. Your presentation was of great assistance in giving us a perspective on the various alternatives, as well as the limitations, confronting us in our own tax forms simplification efforts. It was also very helpful in pinpointing the specific areas in which our current simplification activities will be able to benefit from collaboration with the Document Design Project. On the basis of these emerging understandings, we look forward to further fruitful integration of our common efforts over the coming months.

Thanks again for your time and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Frank

Frank Malanga
Chairman, Long-Range
Tax Forms Simplification
Study Group

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION
BUREAU OF STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20202

MAY 14 1979

Dr. Janice C. Redish
Document Design Project
American Institutes for Research
1055 Thomas Jefferson Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20009

Dear Dr. Redish:

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you, the Document Design Project, and Siegel and Gale for the outstanding work you have done on the applications for student financial aid.

I would like to compliment you on the thorough job done in your study, The Complexity of Financial Aid Applications. I have found your report very enlightening. It calls attention to the many problems with current student aid forms and provides examples of how the forms can be improved. The report has been well-received, and we look forward to distributing it to the financial aid community.

Your report has acted as a catalyst in our movement toward a simplified form. Your thorough assessment of the Basic Grant Form and the Financial Aid Form affectively argues that simplification is necessary and not an option.

I would like to thank you for your enthusiastic assistance as we have developed the new "common form." The result of this hard work is truly satisfying — the millions of students who apply for Basic Grants in 1980-81 will fill out an easier, better form.

Please accept my sincere thanks for a job well done.

Sincerely,

Leo L. Kornfeld
Deputy Commissioner,
Student Financial Assistance

Internal Revenue Service

Department of the Treasury

Washington, DC 20224

Person to Contact:

Telephone Number:

Refer Reply to:

Date:

Dr. Janice C. Redish, Director
Document Design Project
American Institutes for Research
1055 Thomas Jefferson St., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20007

Dear Dr. Redish:

Thanks very much for your assessment and comments regarding our CP-11 and CP-23 High Speed Non-impact Printer (HSNIP) notices.

We also appreciate your taking time to meet with IRS representatives on June 7. Your comments and those of Dan Felker will be given serious consideration in our efforts to simplify and improve our communications with the public.

We are also looking forward to Dan's assistance in the design and, to some extent, in the conduct of our test of Forms 1040 and 1040A for 1979.

Sincerely,

Walter M. Alt
Acting Director
Taxpayer Service Division

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

December 5, 1979

Dear Dr. Felker:

I am writing to express my gratitude for your assistance in designing a general response form for use by consumers in responding to government agency consumer programs proposed under Executive Order 12160.

On very short notice, you and your colleagues at the American Institutes for Research were able to create a brief questionnaire that I am sure will be very useful to consumers unable to submit more traditional written comments.

The Federal Register containing your form will be released by the President's Assistant, Jack Watson, at a press conference in Room 450 of the Old Executive Office Building on Monday, December 10 at 3:00 p.m. If you are interested in attending the press conference, please contact Marianne Wilk at 456-6226.

On behalf of the White House Office of Consumer Affairs and the other agencies participating in the implementation of Executive Order 12160, thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Esther Peterson

Esther Peterson
Special Assistant to the President
for Consumer Affairs

Dr. Daniel Felker
American Institutes for Research
1055 Thomas Jefferson Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20007

BARONI 4100

THE SECRETARY OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20410

December 14, 1979

MEMORANDUM FOR: The President
Attention: Rick Hutcheson, Staff Secretary

Subject: Weekly Report of Major Departmental Activities

GNMA Proving Important Tool for Homeownership. The Government National Mortgage Association (GNMA) guaranteed a record $3.25 billion in mortgage-backed securities during the month of November. This volume brought the total of mortgage-backed securities guaranteed by GNMA to over $23 billion for the first 11 months of 1979 and to over $90 billion since the program's inception less than ten years ago. Since 1970, the GNMA mortgage-backed securities program has provided the financing for almost 3 million home purchases.

We have announced that the GNMA Tandem program will continue and that an additional $1.75 billion in mortgage purchase authority will be available January 7. The funds will finance production of some 53,000 new and substantially rehabilitated housing units, most of these for low and moderate income families in federally insured multifamily projects.

Secretarial Appearances. On Wednesday, December 12, I addressed a Democratic fund raiser in Cleveland. At a news conference held prior to the speech, I praised Administration efforts to bring new life to American cities through the President's National Urban Policy.

On January 10, I will give the keynote speech at ceremonies in Atlanta opening the week-long celebration of the 51st birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Several other key HUD officials will participate in such activities as panel discussions and workshops.

Helping Promote Energy Conservation. Three HUD publications on energy conservation -- Local Government Approaches to Energy Conservation, Energy Conservation and Management Guide for Small Municipalities and School Districts, and Practical Steps Local Governments Can Take to Conserve Energy -- are in demand by persons using the Department of Energy's recently-initiated energy information hotline. Callers find these reports a unique source of information based on demonstration projects that have proven worthwhile to local governments. Each of the reports gives names of project representatives to be contacted for additional details.

Learning to Write Plain English. An evaluation conducted by HUD officials, the American Institute for Research and Dr. Jerome Smith of the University of South Florida suggests that implementation of the March, 1978, Executive Order on use of plain English in federal forms has significantly improved the understanding of federal programs by participants. Clients of HUD programs demonstrated a 20 percent increase in reading understanding of their rights and responsibilities when using available Departmental resources.

Moon

Moon Landrieu

Internal Revenue Service — Department of the Treasury

file IRS

Washington, DC 20224

Person to Contact:
Leo Campbell
Telephone Number:
(202) 566-6254
Refer Reply to:
T:FP
Date: JAN 7 - 1980

Dr. Janice Redish, Director
Document Design Center
American Institutes for Research
1055 Thomas Jefferson, N.W.
Washington, DC 20007

Dear ~~Dr. Redish~~ Ginny:

Thank you for your recent call indicating your continued willingness to work with us. We are studying topics and issues where the Document Design Center might be of help to us. Leo Campbell will be getting back to you on possible collaboration.

Your call also jogged my memory that I haven't properly thanked you for the Center's efforts during last year. In addition to the assistance we received from Drs. Felker and Rose on our summer testing, the close association of Drs. Charrow and Olkes (with the Forms Branch and the Publications Branch, respectively) was greatly appreciated. Several IRS writers have attended your March and June, 1979, training sessions and have reported that the materials and methods they were exposed to have proven quite useful.

For sharing your expertise, time, and concern, I would like to thank you and your associates. I hope these mutual efforts can continue through 1980.

Sincerely,

Bob Brauer

Robert I. Brauer
Chairman, Tax Forms
Coordinating Committee

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE
475 L'Enfant Plaza, SW
Washington, DC 20260

June 4, 1980

Dr. Veda Charrow
American Institutes for Research
1055 Thomas Jefferson Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20007

Dear Dr. Charrow:

Your analysis of our Consumer's Directory has been a hit. The Assistant Postmaster General for Customer Services read your report and asked me to apply the same approach to revision of a larger publication, the Mailers Guide (copy enclosed). Dottie Hagen, a member of my staff, completed a forty page analysis report this week and forwarded it for action. However, it will be several months before revised copies of the Mailers Guide are available.

The Consumer's Directory is in the clearance process. I will send you copies when it is printed.

The work you, Dr. Olkes and Ms. Peck performed on the Consumer's Directory is deeply appreciated.

Sincerely,

Robert K. Jeffery

Robert K. Jeffery
General Manager
Consumer Support Division
Customer Services Department

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE
475 L'Enfant Plaza, SW
Washington, DC 20260

April 28, 1981

Daniel B. Felker, PhD
Document Design Center
American Institutes for Research
1055 Thomas Jefferson Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20007

Dear Dr. Felker:

The purpose of this letter is simply to express my high regard for the quality and range of work performed by the Document Design Center.

I have always found everyone on the center's staff to be very helpful and very responsive. I particularly appreciated your assistance in arranging for Hilda Shakin and Kenneth Best of Siegel & Gale to advise us on format planning for the "International Mail Manual."

Your monthly newsletter "Simply Stated" is always a source of valuable information. I circulate all issues throughout my division and then retain them in permanent files. Thank you for including me on the distribution list.

Sincerely,

M Boudreau

Marguerite Boudreau
General Manager
Directives & Forms Division

•NAVCJ

National Association on Volunteers in Criminal Justice

August 18, 1981

Dr. Janice Redish
Document Design Center
AIR
1055 Thomas Jefferson Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20007

Dear Dr. Redish:

Please excuse the belated note of thanks for the Document Design Center's tremendous contribution to the NAVCJ Guidelines Project. The consultation we have received over the telephone has been a great help, and the workshop given by Dixie Goswami at our Louisville, Kentucky, meeting in late May was probably the turning point of our endeavor to write national guidelines manuals for the design and management of criminal justice volunteer programs.

As Dixie pointed out at the beginning of her session with us, no matter how much effort we put into this project and no matter how many good suggestions we have, the manuals will not change anything if people cannot read and understand them. Dixie's workshop has made a big difference.

Not only did she give our National Advisory Committee excellent direction by drawing attention to audience and purpose, but she pulled off a revolution in the way these people looked at writing. This group of "bureaucrats", as she termed us, resisted at first, but soon joined the movement to abolish passive constructions, awkward nominalizations,* and jargon. As this group began going over the almost four hundred pages of previously written materials, they showed a remarkable change in attitude about what was acceptable and clear writing.

Dixie also gave us some valuable suggestions as to how to handle the review and evaluation process for our project. We had written in a phase of review for the manuals, but the procedure we had chosen does not seem nearly as effective as Dixie's specific questioning approach.

The assistance the Document Design Program has provided the NAVCJ Guidelines Project is making a big difference in the product we are producing. We feel that this product -- national guidelines manuals to help citizens get involved in criminal justice programs -- will have a significant impact on the juvenile and criminal justice systems. We appreciate your contribution. I am,

Sincerely yours,

David Gooch

David Gooch
Associate Director, NAVCJ
Guidelines Project Manager

DG:cs

* Oops!

Post Office Box 6365 • University, Alabama 35486 • Telephone (205) 348-6738

United States of America
Office of
Personnel Management Washington, D.C. 20415

In Reply, Refer To Your Reference

Dr. Janice C. Redish, Project Director
The Document Design Project
American Institutes for Research
1055 Thomas Jefferson Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20007

NOV 23 1981

Dear Dr. Redish:

Thank you for the assistance that the Document Design Project has given during our Standard Form 171 (SF-171) review and revision. During 1980 Drs. Veda Charrow and Cheryl Olkes provided technical assistance during the SF-171 work group meetings and prepared a detailed critique of the instructions to the form.

Dr. Charrow and Ms. Denise Peck met with members of my staff in November of this year, to present a full "mock-up" of the first page of the SF-171 and provide suggested language for the rest of the form. Dr. Charrow and Ms. Peck discussed concepts of design and language simplification which were most informative for my staff. Although Dr. Andrew Rose did not attend this meeting, we would like to acknowledge his participation in preparing the suggested format and language.

I am aware that the grant which provided funding for such projects has been depleted. It is unfortunate that our current budget situation precludes funding further study. However, when we circulate a draft of the proposed revisions to the SF-171, we will provide a copy to Dr. Charrow for any comments time allows.

We greatly appreciate your cooperation and concern for raising the quality of government forms.

Sincerely,

William [signature]

for Richard B. Post, Assistant
Director for Staffing

CON 114-24
January 1979